

# Impact of COVID-19 on Course Presentation & the Efficacy

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## Abstract

With the appearance of COVID-19 in March of 2020, classes on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University's (SFASU) were forced to move online out of concern for the health and safety of the faculty and students. Due to this fact, the modality of many courses was forced to change. With the change of modality, some students and faculty- who had limited experience with online classes- were forced to conquer the entirety of their course load and instruction online. However, with this abrupt change arose some creative teaching techniques that aided students' remote academic success for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester. The data collected suggests that the presentation styles most effective are those that are innovative, as well as flexible.

## Introduction

After the unexpected outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent cancelation of in-person instruction offered by SFASU, the Agriculture department wanted to test the efficiency of the teaching styles employed by the faculty and staff of the department. A survey was sent to the population, all registered students in the Agriculture department, and a sample size of 94 respondents was established. This data will be used to aid the faculty in further online instruction, as well as, aid in the decision of whether or not to offer as course completely online or in other modes.

## Objectives

1. Describe the amount of online classes the students have taken previous to the outbreak of COVID-19.
2. Determine the presentation of content of the course post-dismissal.
3. Determine the efficacy of each modality used in agriculture classes.
4. Describe which online presentation style is most preferred.

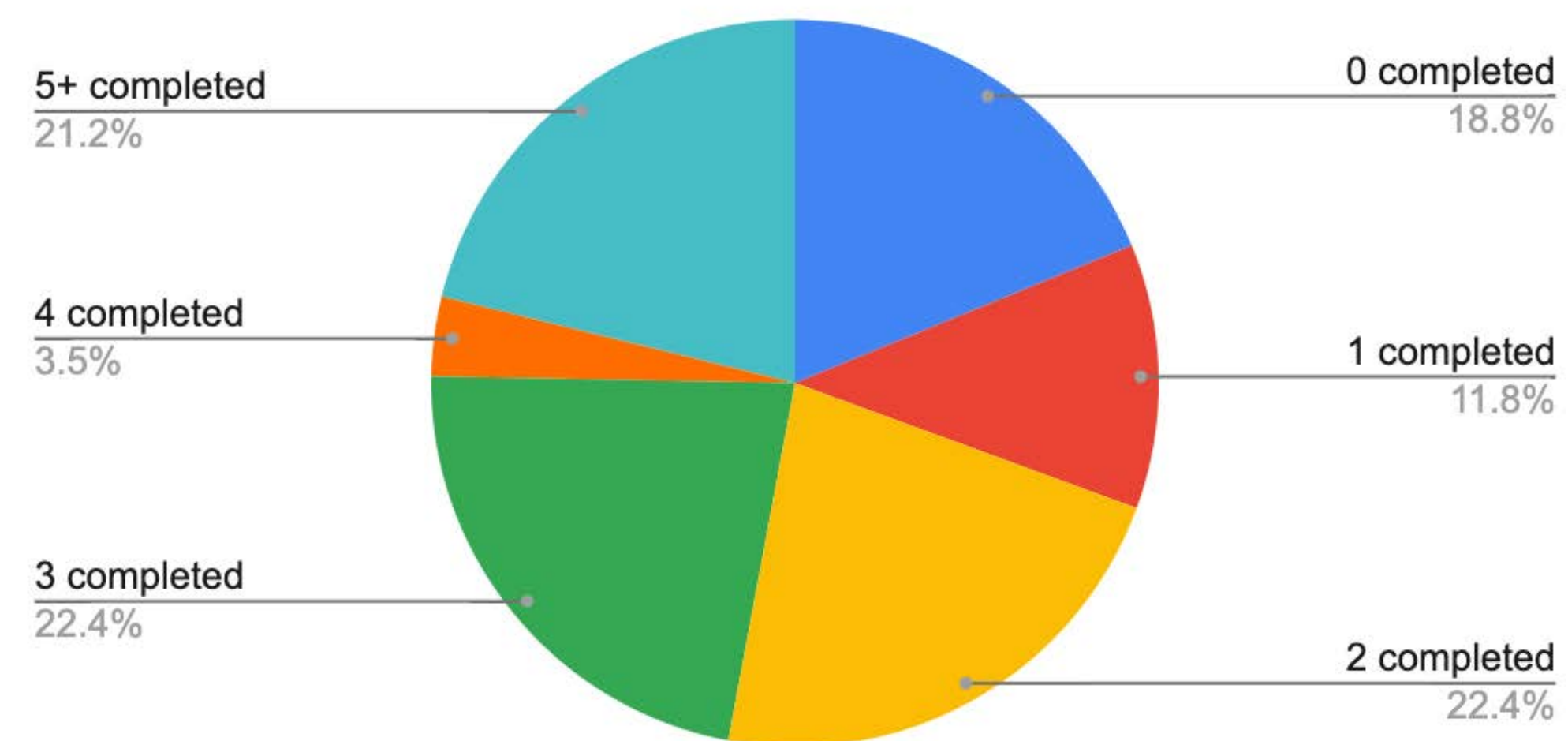
## Methods

The methods used in this study are as follows:

1. The utilization of Qualtrics survey. The researcher-developed survey was sent to a panel of experts to ensure face and content validity.
2. The survey was then distributed to the population on April 24, 2020. A reminder email was sent out May 1, 2020.
3. Demographics were collected on each surveyed individual including gender, classification, and living arrangement changes (if any) experienced by the respondent.
4. Using the descriptive statistics from Qualtrics Analytics, data was analyzed.

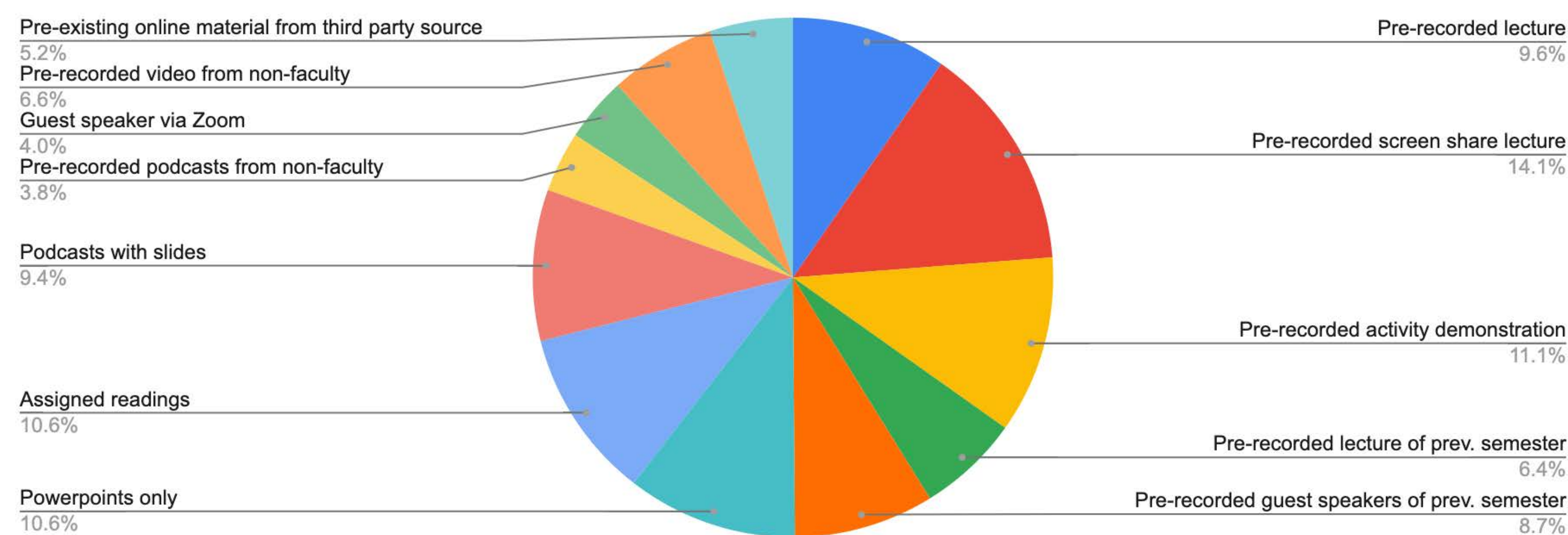
## Results

Online Courses Completed by Respondents

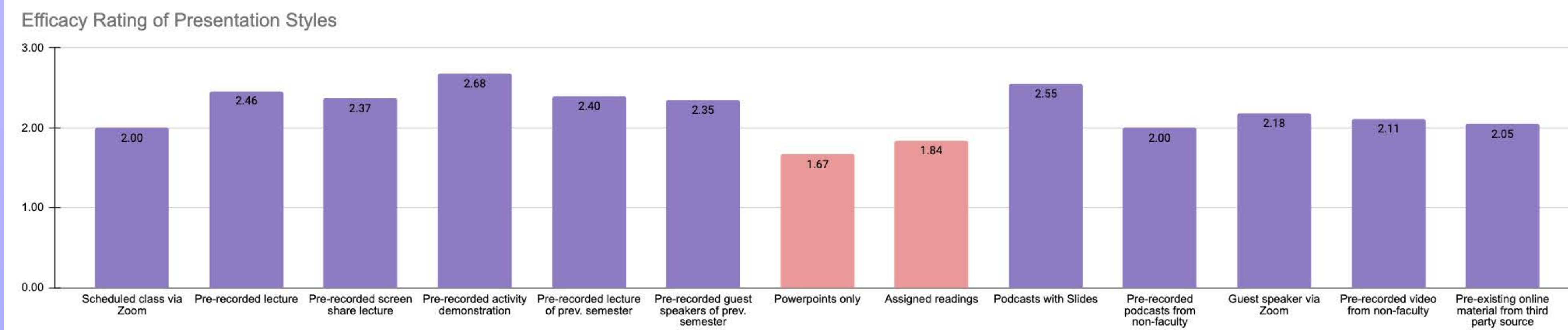


**Figure 1.** The chart depicts the amount of online courses completed by the respondents.

Presentation Style of Course Material (Post-dismissal)



**Figure 2.** The chart depicts the presentation of course materials for the agricultural courses during the Spring 2020 semester experienced by the respondents.



Note: Scale of 1, 2, and 3 are representative of the not effective, somewhat effective, and extremely effective, respectively, of the presentation style observed.

**Figure 3.** The table depicts the average efficacy rating of each presentation style for the Spring 2020 semester, post-dismissal. The red columns are denoting the presentation styles with an efficacy rating below the somewhat effective value of 2.

## Discussion

The study effectively met all of the objectives the study set out to answer. Figure 1 shows the amount of online courses completed by each respondent before the dismissal of face-to-face instruction during the COVID-19 outbreak of the Spring 2020 semester. While approximately 47.1% of the respondents had completed three or more online courses prior to the Spring 2020 semester, there are respondents that had not. This suggests that for some students, those with limited online academic instruction experience, the online instruction was unfamiliar. The faculty of SFASU's Agriculture department provided a wide array of teaching styles to present the remainder of the course material, as depicted in Figure 2. The most prevalent teaching style employed by the faculty of the Agriculture department was a screen-shared lecture at approximately 14%, followed by a pre-recorded activity demonstration at approximately 11%. However, as explained in Figure 3, the most effective presentation style used was the pre-recorded activity demonstration at an average rating of 2.68, followed by podcasts with slides- a unique teaching style employed by one faculty member to engage students- at an average rating of 2.55.

## Conclusion

In future online deliverance of course material, innovative and current techniques, such as the utilization of podcasts, may prove very beneficial to the online academic success of students. Another important factor to consider is the amount of flexibility granted by the presentation style, as exemplified in the pre-recorded options. Given the uncertainty of times during the COVID-19 pandemic, students benefit from the adaptable nature of instruction. Due to the fact that the environment- both mentally and physically- can change, students should be granted the opportunity to continue to learn in a conducive and flexible nature.

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